(d) whether the work has been started in any segment and if so, the details thereof;

(e) if answer to part (d) be in the negative, the reasons therefor and by when the work is likely to be started; and

(f) by when the entire project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (f) As all the Major Ports are already connected to the nearest National Highways, there is no project, at present, to further connect them to the nearest National Highways.

Expansion Plan of SCI

2983. DR.Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether tonnage under Indian Flagships have come down by 10 per cent and reduced to only 30 per cent whereas both tonnage coming in and going out of the country is on the rise; and

(b) if so, the major expansion plans proposed by the Shipping Corporation of India to help growth of Indian Shipping Industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Though the share of Indian shipping in overseas trade has been hovering around 30% during the last 10 years, the cargo carried in real terms has increased from 38.86 million tonnes in 1990-91 to 70.58 million tonnes in 1999-2000. The Shipping Corporation of India has already placed orders for construction of 8 vessels during 2000-2001 and has also proposed to acquire 10 more vessels during the current financial year to help growth of Indian Shipping Industry.

Constitutional Amendment for ban on Conversion

†2984. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has made a demand for amendments in the Constitution for imposing ban on conversion in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the manner in which Government propose to deal with the problem alongwith Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) As per information available, no demand for amendment in the Constitution for imposing ban on conversion in the country has been received from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

(c) According to Article 25(1) of the Constitution of India, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion subject to public order, morality and health. Since 'Public Order' is listed as Item No. 1 of List II State List of 7th Schedule of the Constitution, the Law & Order matter relating to conversions are to be taken care of by the respective State Governments.

Closing down of the GLDC and GHC

2985. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocted to the various corporation for the economic upliftment of SCs and STs, other backward classes and minorities.

(b) whether Government are aware of the decision of the Gujarat Government of closing down the Gujarat Leather Development Corporation and Gujarat Handloom Corporation;

(c) whether the revival of the said corporations is helpful for the rural population and SCs and STs in particular;

(d) if so, whether Government contemplate to revive the same; and

(e) the details of strategy being contemplated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The National and State level Corporations set up for economic upliftment of SCs, and STs, other backward classes and minorities have been provided funds as indicated below (up to March, 2001):—